The Price of Subversion

Ex-CIA Agent Reveals the Truth About the U.S. in Angola

BY JON STEINBERG

"My CIA recruiters lied to me about the clandestine services as they swore me in," says John Stockwell explaining why he wrote In Search of Enemies, published May 8. "They insisted the CIA functioned to gather intelligence. It did not kill, use drugs or damage people's lives, they assured me. These lies were perpetuated in the following year of training courses. It was not until the disclosures of the Church and Pike Committees in 1975 that I learned the full, shocking truth about my employers."

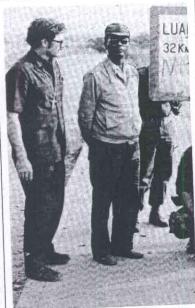
Though he felt increasingly uncomfortable with these truths, Stockwell continued to serve the agency which had lied to him. To his surprise, he was given a high position in the CIA's Angola operation. This time he went with his eyes

The CIA Stockwell describes combines the politics of Machiavelli, the efficiency of the Keystone Kops and the generosity of the fat boy on the block who wants to be liked and has a big allowance.

During his early days with FEATURE, as the Angola project was code-named, Stockwell was amazed to discover from one of the CIA's top experts on Southern Africa that "The Soviets did not make the first move on Angola. Other people did. The Chinese and the United States. The Soviets have been a half-step behind, countering our moves."

Once FEATURE was set in motion, those involved scurried in every direction to keep it secret from Congress and the public. Some were figuring out how to enter Angola unobserved while others were trading weapons to Israel in exchange for captured Soviet arms which could cover American tracks. Some were supplying Holden Roberto's FNLA with boots and guns when it had almost no troops to use them, while others were writing propaganda for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces, fabricating explicit and imaginary details of rape and pillage by Cuban troops.

President Carter's attack on Cuban policy in Africa as an attempt "to subvert other people through military means" carries far less weight after Stockwell's account, which shows that the Cubans arrived in Africa in large



Ex-CIA agent John Stockwell (standing on edge of road) with FNLA commanders and a Brazilian major (squatting).

numbers for the first time only after the South African invasion and CIAsupported offensives seriously threatened the MPLA.

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Stockwell does not know if the American government was directly involved in the South African decision to invade. Prime Minister Vorster, among others, has strongly hinted it was. Stockwell says that "the CIA has traditionally sympathized with South Africa and enjoyed a close liaison with BOSS," its secret police, to the extent that there is no independent American intelligence operation in South Africa. The Americans also discussed Angola with French intelligence agents, who fleeced the CIA, providing a mercenary recruiter who conned the Americans out of taxpayers' dollars, while at the same time conducting their own operations in Angola without informing the CIA.

Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, long on the CIA gift list, helped out as well, supplying troops and transport in exchange for lavish sums. FEATURE

agents thought him not only greedy bu singularly ungrateful; after all, Stockwel reveals, the U.S. was fighting the MPL. partly because of old ally Mobutu' persistent requests. (The CIA had bee involved in the murder of his rive Patrice Lumumba in 1961. Stockwell als confirms the widespread charge that the CIA had a role in the overthrow of President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.)

How many other plots, assassination coups and wars has the CIA bee involved in? We may never know. Stocl well explains that all the damning info mation is kept in "soft" files. They are n registered in official records and are ther fore immune from leaks via the Freedo of Information Act, Congressional con mittees and even, if need be, the Pre dent-assuming the President and Co gress want to know. As Stockwell poin out in his introduction, the slap on t wrist given former CIA Director Richa Helms for perjuring himself before Senate committee is, in effect, offic approval of the CIA's right to lie to government and the American peor Influential publications such as The N York Times and the Washington P support this policy wholeheartedly, Richard Harris shows in his eloqu examination of the Helms case in April 10 New Yorker.

John Stockwell is no radical. Like organization he served for 12 years, would still unhesitatingly squeeze toothpaste tube from the top: He is c vinced that the war in Angola wo have been won if the CIA's allies been given a couple of helicopter i ships. He doesn't wonder why the Zai and FNLA troops raped and pills while the Cubans and MPLA didn't. probably wouldn't understand why no surprise that the week his book released, the South African army again invaded Angola and slaught nearly 600 unarmed Namibian refu many of them children.

Stockwell does know that the Cl uncontrolled, unaccountable and a tomed to confusing its own security that of the American people. The Ro learned the lesson too late: that if a powerful Praetorian Guard is creat protect the emperor it may even choose its own occupant for the thr